

A MATTER OF QUALITY

A SIDH RESEARCH STUDY REVEALS WHAT PEOPLE IN TEHRI-GARHWAL WANT FROM EDUCATION



A MATTER OF QUALITY

**Expectations and Perceptions of Schooling
in Rural and Urban Areas of Uttarakhand**

GYAN TARANG series on Contextual Learning



A MATTER OF QUALITY

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This study was carried out by *Sanshodhan* - the research and advocacy wing of Bodhigram. The aim of *Sanshodhan* is to identify alternatives to the current system of education by exploring what is going on in schools and what their place is in the wider socio-political context.

To do so, it:

- a) conducts research, seeking to uncover assumptions inherent in the present system of education.
- b) experiments with alternatives to formal education.
- c) provides research inputs for other units of Bodhigram, such as: *Sushiksha*, *Sanjeevani*, *Samvad* and *Sanmati*.

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Pawan K. Gupta
Director
SIDH

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

"The only thing worse than inaccessible education is easy access to a bad education." This is what we said in 1998, in our preface to the first edition of **A Matter of Quality**. Sadly, the intervening ten years of so-called "development" has only underlined this further. Schools are numerically more, and closer to many more villages, but the question about the relevance of such education persists, even today.

In the name of globalisation, society the world over is being standardised to conform to the dominant worldview of polity and economy – education, therefore, is becoming a tool to accomplish such a conformity. Social observers are calling this process "macdonaldisation".

In the last ten years, India is seen to have "developed" according to the tenets of modern civilization – GDP, GNP, Market Capitalisation etc. (politicians do not seem to mind that increased production of medicines is *an addition* to GDP, and not an indication of national sickness).

The region of Tehri-Garhwal that SIDH works in, is now part of the state of Uttarakhand, which, like the Indian government, is carrying forward this modern belief. The result is that rural communities have been brutalised by this global sweep of *macdonaldisation*, which serves a uniform diet of views, conclusions, prejudices and aspirations. The global has swallowed the local.

Indeed, it looks as if present education *itself* is a danger to Indian society.

We observed in this study ten years ago that village communities in this region were questioning contemporary education and demanding something more relevant. Today, many in the same communities are echoing the *mantra* of modern civilization, viz. schooling in English (which is "better" than Garhwali or Hindi) leads to an office or desk job (which is "superior" to farming or local craft), which may lead to life in a town/city

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(moving forward from the "backward" village). Mahatma Gandhi's vision and prophecy (see 'Preface to the First Edition') seem to have been completely forgotten.

Even SIDH has not escaped from this modern predilection. Some of our own teachers have stopped farming and have little respect for manual work, moving towards a vague concept of easy living. They have been stupefied into believing this modern *mantra* and the symbols which it displays.

Modern civilization has a strong ally in the media, which is both pervasive and pernicious. Television is today available to every village home, so there is easy access to bad education. In the last ten years, there has been less questioning of the assumptions behind education, probably because the mind has been dulled by entertainment.

This, then, is the background in which we are bringing out this second edition of **"A Matter of Quality."** It is a fact that the first edition, and its several re-prints, have elicited a tremendous response over the years. There is a community of serious people who are exploring the content of education and its relationship to social and ecological order. The acceleration of modern civilization has its critics in all parts of the world, and many among them have been very supportive of the activities of SIDH and the questions we have raised. If these questions were relevant ten years ago, they have become critical now.

This second edition has been re-visited thoroughly and many changes effected to make it more lucid. Errors have been rectified. We acknowledge our grateful thanks to Neela Vasvani and Venkatesh Rajan for re-editing this book, and to Kusuma Trust, Gibraltar, which has contributed financially for the printing of this second edition.

SIDH, Tehri-Garhwal

March, 2009

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

For the past ten years, SIDH, a voluntary organization, has been providing educational opportunities in the rural areas of Tehri Garhwal district in the Central Himalayas.

SIDH started its first school in Jaunpur block of Tehri district as a direct response to the needs of the community. Over the years, the organisation has grown from one to eighteen primary and pre-primary schools (in villages where there are no government schools).

After ten years of work, SIDH observed that most parents seemed unhappy with the current education system and its impact upon their children. Therefore, we began focusing on educational quality as seen in a relevant socio-political, cultural, and historical context.

The following study probes the relevance of India's school system through an examination of people's perceptions of education. The study was conceived by Pawan K. Gupta and Anuradha Joshi as a result of their experiences with SIDH schools and frequent interactions with the community. The study was conducted in the hope of improving SIDH's school programme, and also to forcefully communicate the voices of the marginalised majority to the elite which runs the education system.

The respondents were categorized on the basis of income (LIG - Low Income Group, MIG - Middle Income Group, and HIG - High Income Group), gender, and location (rural/urban).

The villages of Jaunpur block comprise the rural samples (See Appendix 1 for details of Jaunpur), while the town of Mussoorie comprises the urban samples. Qualitative methods, namely FGDs (Focus Group Discussions) and interviews were employed. Four research assistants (Jagmohan, Siya, Jaipal and Savitri) worked in the field under the guidance of Anuradha (for further information on our methodology, see Appendix 1).

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This project was a tremendous learning experience for the research team. We examined ourselves as much as we examined India's education system. *During the course of our study, we realised that perhaps our colonial past has caused us to forget how to speak out what we really think or feel. Instead, we speak what we presume others want to hear.* Our aspirations are moulded by the dominant classes, who we tend to imitate rather than challenge. These contradictions and conflicts need to be examined sensitively, keeping in mind the historical reasons behind such behavior. In order to conduct a balanced and fair research study, every researcher must question him/herself, and understand his/her own cultural lenses and ways of looking at the world. We have attempted to do this, throughout.

Originally, the purpose of our project was to find out what people thought about education. We contacted various groups from both rural and urban areas. The initial responses were not unexpected as they had been previously documented by other research studies. However, prior studies had restricted their research to issues of access, enrollment, dropout rates, and infrastructure needs. Our study attempts to probe further.

In the course of our pursuit, we stumbled upon many contradictions and complications. There were sharp contrasts in the responses of urban, rural, male, female, and literate, non-literate.

We discovered that it is not just access, but relevance, that is a determining factor in education. We listened to the needs of people, spoken in their own voices. We were attentive to the culturally specific response - style of Indians. We were always careful to conduct a deep examination to ensure that our conclusions were not contrary to what respondents actually meant.

For us, this study was a very humbling experience. Our findings were a strong affirmation of what Gandhiji knew more than eighty years ago. The heartening thing was that our so-called "uneducated" women and men still speak the language of Gandhiji - a clarity of thought significantly less prevalent among urban, high-income

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literates. It is clear that the sentiments of the rural, low-income non-literate community need to be taken seriously by our policy-makers. Their voices need to be heard; their experiences must not be undervalued. In fact, the main highlights of this study are some profound and simply articulated suggestions by rural non-literate women. *Non-literate, but not uneducated.*

In considering the findings of our study, it became obvious that people are not happy with the present educational system in India and its exclusive focus on imparting information. *People want a value-based and economically relevant system, one that will encourage children to be responsible and useful members of society.* As the study indicates, there is immense social pressure to continue sending children to schools, regardless of the quality of education received.

Significantly, there was little comment on the qualitative aspects of schools, such as curriculum and pedagogy. While people agreed on the need for change, they did not have positive suggestions on how to improve the system.

Gandhiji often talked about the difficulties of trying to change the system of which one is a product, and of the paralysing effects of modern education and state-domination on a person's ability to envision alternatives. The influence of dominant ideologies such as "development," "progress," "market economics," and "modern education," make it very difficult to defy convention and work toward alternatives. Unfortunately, such a dominant system has now become very pervasive, in the name of globalization.

In many research studies, researchers tend to exclude his/her own class from the research sample. This could be because of the Western focus on 'objectivity' in the scientific paradigm, or because of our colonial past which separated the elite from the majority. It is normally the most advantaged people who conduct research, and it is therefore not surprising that findings and recommendations are often very much in alignment with the world view of the ruling elite. In this study, we often had this problem. Our own guilt and prejudices kept creeping in and only an honest self-examination - both disturbing and painful - helped us overcome the hurdle. Our efforts

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to remain self-conscious were greatly aided by the pioneering research work of Dharampalji.

In education, it is generally believed that the issue of access is more important than quality. But the two are, in fact, equally important. The only thing worse than inaccessible education is easy access to a bad education. The issues of quality and relevance must be addressed and given priority. This is what people have universally stated - parents, teachers, and students, alike.

Many of the findings in this study challenge the inherent assumptions behind the eighteen core indicators identified in the Education For All 2000 Assessment Exercise, which is being conducted globally. However, the unprecedented nature of this study by no means detracts from its validity.

By questioning the education system, we aim to improve it. Each student with a relevant education is one more positive influence on society as a whole.

SIDH, Tehri-Garhwal

1998

MAJOR FINDINGS

Contradictions

A significant finding of this study was contradictions in the views of respondents "(rural and urban, literate and non literate, and LIG (Lower income), MIG (Middle income) and HIG (Higher income groups)":

- The majority of rural responses showed the perception of a literate or "educated" person to be someone who remains unemployed, cannot do manual work, lacks ethics/morality, becomes self-centered, and subscribes to the consumer culture. Yet, parents still wanted to send their children to school.
- Parents expected their children to be honest, committed, kind, considerate, helpful, etc., but they did not seem to mind it that the methodologies and curriculum of the schools their children went to did not meet these expectations.
- Confusion about *naukri* (jobs): In rural areas, people said with conviction that most literate people were unemployed and that chances of government jobs were few. Yet, for parents, the number one aspiration was for a government job for their children.
- Contradiction in the attitude toward *shram* or manual labour. People regretted that their literate children did not like to do manual labour. Yet, they said they were sending their children to school so that "they will not have to cut grass and pick up *gobar* like us."
- The urban elite which plans and implements our education

*"... a literate or
'educated' person
is someone
who cannot do
manual work, and
who lacks ethics."*

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programme hopes to create a better society. But what contemporary schooling is doing to rural communities is voiced in this typical quote from a village woman of Tehri-Garhwal, "I do not know how many opportunities the present system opens up for our children, but it has certainly closed one door for them - that of returning to the fields". Is this what our planners want?

Expectations From Children

"Hona sikhao, dikhna nahin" (Teach them "to be," not "to appear")

*"The present system
has certainly
closed one door
for our children-
that of returning
to the fields."*

- Though the study did not initially set out to probe "values in education," this issue emerged as an important expectation. Most parents felt that their children should develop into good human beings. And they expected schools to teach their children to do so.
- Literacy, much more than income, reflected the differences in response between rural and urban groups. The lower the literacy, the higher the priority given to inner qualities or character. Even the non-literate HIG men in rural areas gave priority to good character rather than a job.
- The literate HIG did not give any priority to farming, but expected their children to come first in class and get jobs.
- A majority of parents, especially from the non-literate, low-income groups and rural women, felt that attention needs to be paid to teaching values and ethics in schools. They defined values as: *non-violence, responsibility, faith and self-esteem*. Ethics were defined as: *honesty, justice, truthfulness, integrity and shudhta*

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(clean body, mind, and soul). Responsibility was defined as: *determination, duty and commitment.*

- Rural women differentiated between quality (*guna*) and internalizing a quality (*gunana*). They were concerned with internalizing qualities of good character (*gunana*) and stressed the importance of "being" (*hona*), rather than "appearance" (*dikhna*).
- Only rural HIG women mentioned the importance of qualities like "love" and "non-violence" by name. But a loose operational definition of such things was given by all rural parents, teachers and children as: treating older people with respect, showing *hospitality, speaking gently, not fighting with each other, and an emphasis on family bonds*. They said, "if homes are happy, there is happiness outside, too". (*Ghar shudh, bahar bhi shudh*).
- The urban, literate group defined ethics in negative terms, such as: *not stealing, not breaking locks, not cheating, not lying, not being greedy, not being selfish, not getting angry, not being in bad company, not indulging in vices like smoking, drinking, gambling* etc.

"They were concerned with internalising qualities... and stressed the importance of 'being' rather than 'appearance'..."

Expectation From School

"Naukari ki jadh pathar par" (a job has no roots)

- Education is generally perceived as a necessary requirement for getting a job. To discuss this further, the distinctions between rural and urban definitions of "a job" must first be understood. The most coveted job, according to all categories of respondents, is a government job because it means less work, job security, and one can expect *"upar ki aamdani"*

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(bribes).

"Traditional skills/ livelihoods were given priority by LIG in both urban and rural areas. A job was not a high priority. 'Naukri ki jad patthar par' (a job has shallow roots, implying that a job does not provide security)."

- Both rural and urban people consider a job, especially a government job, as a main goal in life. The difference between rural and urban people lies in the degree of hope in getting such a job. Urban people still see a job as the only possibility; but, rural people seem to have given up hope of attaining jobs.
- Traditional skill/livelihoods were given priority by LIG in both urban and rural areas. They stressed the importance of traditional occupations. HIG parents, however, did not do so. For rural non-literate and rural LIG, a job was not a high priority: *"Naukri ki jad pathar par"* (a job has shallow roots, implying that a job does not have security), was a phrase uttered by many.
- While all government teachers felt that the most important function of a school was to help a student get a job, many private school teachers saw a school as a place to develop the individual interest of the child and instill values, confidence, and self-esteem.
- The study found two distinct kinds of urban HIG schools. Children from a school that followed an American syllabus and catered to non-residential Indians and other foreigners, expected a good school to help a child discover his/her identity – they were also concerned with the low self-esteem of Indian children. On the other hand, children from a common private missionary school following the Indian syllabus, voiced no such concerns – they, in fact, expected a good school to help a child in migrating to the USA.
- Rural LIG expectations of their educated children were that they

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should acquire enough knowledge to not get cheated or fooled by others. Incidentally, they also felt that the cheats and exploiters in society were among those who were literate.

- Significantly, rural parents had much more information about the schools and teachers than their counterparts in urban areas.

- **On school management:**

One main demand of rural parents was that schools should be closer to the village. In the study area, there is one school per *gram sabha*, which may cover three or four villages. This means that children have to walk long distances to reach school. Not only is this physically strenuous for a young child, but it also prevents female children from attending school - as it means spending a long time away from home. Another demand of rural parents was that local teachers be recruited.

- **On discipline:**

All parents rejected beating as a method of discipline. Everyone strongly felt that if the teacher was hostile, the students would not wish to attend school. However, at the same time, parents expected bestowing of a sense of discipline and obedience in students.

- **On curriculum/pedagogy:**

These were prioritized as: teaching of skills that are the basis of traditional livelihoods, teaching of moral values/ethics, learning by understanding, teaching of English, and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and general knowledge.

"Incidentally, they (rural respondents) also felt that the cheats and exploiters were among those who were literate."

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- The necessity of learning English was articulated much more by literate rural people, and was not an issue in urban responses (perhaps because English is already taught in most urban schools). However, all urban children listed English classes as an important requirement of a good school.

Role Of the Teacher

- The duties expected of a teacher were prioritized as: good teaching, responsibility, regular attendance, good relationship with children and peers, not beating the children, and maintaining discipline in class.
- All respondents felt a teacher should be a *role model* for the students.
- Most people felt: "Good schools are made by good teachers, not good students". They also felt a good teacher is one who genuinely loves the children - so that children are keen to go to school.
- Most of the literate, urban parents placed an emphasis on the expectation that teachers help children get through class competitive exams.
- Rural children from government schools expected teachers not discriminate between rich and poor, and low and high caste students, and also not to beat the students. Urban LIG and MIG children expected a good teacher to be unbiased, free of personal prejudices, and to not insult students.
- Private school teachers laid more stress on a teacher's creativity and the importance of teachers as role models. However, government school teachers did not comment on the

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responsibility of teachers. They felt that parents were indifferent towards the children.

- Absenteeism of teachers was a major complaint of rural parents, whereas in urban areas, private tuition was cited as the major problem. Urban LIGs defined a “good” school as one where there was no pressure to give tuition, whereas urban MIGs defined a “good school” as one where test results are high. For the LIG respondents, a good school is simply one where the children can go (*jahan bacchhe ja sake*) – meaning close to home, no rules regarding expensive dresses or shoes and where the children do not need to take money to school.
- Urban HIG parents also mentioned that, while attending elite schools, due to peer pressure, children often demanded a lot of consumer goods, and were generally impolite and unruly.

Impact On Children

“Bachche Barbaad Ho Gaye” (Our children have been ruined)

- While exploring the impact of education, phrases like *barbaad ho gaye* (our children have been ruined) and *bigad gaye* (our children have become spoilt) kept recurring when parents in rural/urban areas referred to their children or present-day youth.
- Almost all parents expressed disappointment and unhappiness with the way their children were turning out; all blamed the current education system for making their children *barbaad* (in the rural areas) and *bigaad diya* (in the urban areas).
- The word *barbaad* was used by rural parents while referring to youth who refuse to do any work either in the fields or at home,

*“They blamed
the current
education system
for making their
children 'barbaad'
(in rural areas)
and 'bigade huye'
(in urban areas).”*

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even when they are jobless.

- In the urban context, the term *bigad gaye hain* (they have been spoilt) referred to rude, arrogant youth, infatuated with market culture.
- All parents felt that the present day education system alienated their children from their belief system, which led to indifference towards land, family, and customs. The urban MIG felt their children studying in English-medium schools had become emotionally alienated.
- According to majority opinion, young people become *barbaad* or *bigade* when:
 - They study but do not get jobs, and then choose not to earn their livelihoods by working with their hands (in rural areas).
 - When they do not respect their parents and elders, do not listen to them, talk rudely, do what they wish to do, behave arrogantly at home, do not inform people at home about their whereabouts (in both rural and urban areas).
 - When they smoke, drink, steal, cheat, hide facts, run away from school, see too many films (in urban and rural areas).
- A frequent complaint was about the alienation of the literate/educated – that he does not fit into society. “The rural educated is made fit for a city, while the urban educated is made fit for a foreign country” (*gaon ka padha-likha shahar mein, aur shahar ka padha-likha videsh mein fit hota hai*). No wonder the literate educated person is unable to make any contribution to society.

*“The literate person
feels alienated...
the rural educated
is made fit for
a city, while the
urban educated
is made fit for
a foreign country.”*

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Literate versus Non-literate

The majority of respondents, across all groups, spoke of certain changes in behavior, attitude, and skill, that distinguish non-literate from literate people.

"The most overwhelming need for literacy was to prevent being tricked by others (thage nahin jaye). Yet, they also said that it is the literate people who cheat."

- The non-literate articulated their pain and problems quite vividly. They said that illiteracy "was a curse", that they cannot "sit and talk in a group of literates," and "nobody asks us for advice," etc. It was found that the lower the literacy, the higher the expectations from literacy, some of them as overrated as the completely unfounded claim that literate people could do virtually anything: *"Jo chahe kar sakte hain, jahaj bhi chala sakte hain (they can even fly a plane)"*.
- Along with this, some non-literates had a poor opinion regarding their own status: they felt they could not do anything, that they are foolish, that the literate can even cut grass better, that the literate does everything properly (*padhe likhe sab kaam dhang se karte hain*).
- Apart from known merits of literacy like being able to sign/read/write letters, etc., the most overwhelming need for literacy was to prevent being tricked by others (*thage nahin jaye*). Yet, they also said that it is the literate people who cheat.
- It was also felt that while the literate have more information, this is restricted to books. The non-literate has more practical knowledge and an expertise in some particular skill (*kisi hunar mein top mein hote hai*). The non-literate person also has a quicker grasp of things/facts.

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"The non-literate person has no shame in doing any kind of manual work, while the literate person likes to roam around and is lazy."

- The non-literate person has no shame in doing any kind of manual work like taking care of animals, cleaning the house, cutting grass, working in the fields, picking up gobar and other loads, etc., while the literate person is more inhibited regarding the kind of work he/she does. The literate person does less work at home, likes to roam around, likes to rest more, dislikes physical labour, is lazy, prefers to earn a lot of money with minimum effort, and likes a lot of rest and leisure (*unhe aram chahiye*).
- Compared to the non-literate, literate people were considered more arrogant, greedy, crooked, bad tempered, less truthful, and less tolerant. The literate person was said to tell more lies and indulges in more petty thefts (*chori dakaiti, ulta kaam*) than a non-literate person.
- Non-literate people in rural areas still consider their traditional occupations a good alternative to a job. The literate person does not.
- The non-literates agreed that working with hands is very important but is not considered respectable by many people in society. So, though all non-literate and neo-literate rural men and women stressed the importance of working with hands, especially in the fields, they thought it was inferior work because manual labour is not equated with social prestige.
- The youth, too, illustrated this difference by saying that "superior" work is that which is: done as far away from the house or village as possible, involves the direct transaction of money and working with pen and paper while being seated upon a chair, or working with machines without dirtying one's hands.

SUMMARY

The study showed a gap between what parents expected a school to teach children (in terms of values, ethics, behaviour, character building), and what schools actually taught. However, this contradiction did not seem to be perceived directly by parents.

The study revealed the sense of deep disappointment in the way education unrealistically moulds the aspirations of the young. All groups of urban parents and rural HIG parents regretted that education had instilled consumer culture in their children. Parents said children liked to go to the market, buy expensive goods, stay out of the house till late at night, and considered Western people to be their role models. This was, in a way, confirmed by children of an elite English school when they said that the role of a good school was to help a child migrate to the USA!

Paradoxically, it was precisely to prevent children from getting spoiled that most urban HIG parents (who probably have the maximum choices) withdrew their children after Class 9 from elite English medium schools and put them in government-aided schools.

Rural parents strongly criticized modern education. They felt it had alienated their children from the community and its belief systems. They felt it had fostered indifference towards land, family, culture, and customs. The disenfranchisement of literate youth from their land, culture, and their feelings of superiority over physical labour seem to be one of the most destructive aspect of the present education system.

Rural youth often refuse to engage in agriculture or other traditional occupations, and prefer instead to take up a job in an urban centre.

"Rural parents felt that modern education had alienated their children from the community. It had fostered indifference towards land, family, culture and customs."

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Migration has been linked directly to the spread of education. Youth now travel to cities in search of jobs. Not only are there not enough jobs available in cities, but, given the poor quality of education rural youths have received, they are deemed “unemployable”. This creates a two-fold problem - it fuels rising unemployment levels in urban centres, and agricultural lands lie fallow due to lack of cultivation.

“It seems the major problem in our present education system is the lack of values and ethics in the classroom, and that 'learning' has narrowed to only imparting information.”

Despite disappointment in the education system, parents are still sending children to school. There seems to be general consensus on this. Besides the importance of basic literacy (in not being cheated, in creating more safety and opportunity - be it from reading up on new agricultural methods and putting them into practice, or being able to read a legal document, etc.), there is also the reason of social pressure: “What will the neighbours think?” Based on this study's findings, it seems the major problem in our present education system is the lack of values and ethics in the classroom, and that “learning” has narrowed to only imparting information and preparing for rote exams - to the exclusion of everything else.

Respondents have made it clear the people want a value-based education system that will help their children become useful, productive members of society. What the education system has done - alienating the child from his own society and encouraging him to be a market-driven consumer - is self defeating. The disappointments and frustrations of the parents in this study are mirrored in the hearts of people throughout our nation. It is abundantly clear that the present system does not serve our children properly.

DISCUSSION

The Two Roles of Education

"Rural people, in particular women, were more concerned about 'being' (hona) than 'appearance' (dikhna). They defined values in positive terms such as integrity, commitment and responsibility."

There are two conflicting points of view regarding education. The utilitarian view stresses the production of manpower in a competitive world. The Classical or idealised view of education stresses the development of an individual beyond prerequisites of vocation and civic role. One of the most significant findings of this study is that by and large, rural people still believe in the classical idea of education. Their demand for values over jobs was similar to what Gandhiji said in 1916: "Education is not an end in itself, but a tool. Education that strengthens our moral character is true education."

There are two conflicting points of view regarding education. The utilitarian view stresses the production of manpower in a competitive world. The Classical or idealised view of education stresses the development of an individual beyond prerequisites of vocation and civic role. One of the most significant findings of this study is that by and large, rural people still believe in the classical idea of education. Their demand for values over jobs was similar to what Gandhiji said in 1916: "Education is not an end in itself, but a tool. Education that strengthens our moral character is true education."

Thus, what the rural majority are asking for is "true education." But our education system has been veering toward the utilitarian role. This trend has influenced the mindset and expectations of much of the country.

While no questions were asked specifically about values and ethics, it came across very forcefully that all parents were deeply concerned about

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the values and ethics of their children. Parents, especially from rural areas, and from non-literate and low-income groups, stressed the need for inculcating values in children; they expected the schools to perform this role.

It is worth noting that rural people, in particular, women, were more concerned about “being” (*hona*) than “appearance” (*dikhna*). In fact, they hardly spoke about behavior except in terms of “showing respect to elders”. They defined values and ethics in positive terms such as integrity, commitment, and responsibility, and related all of these qualities to dharma. Responsibility was not thought of as a “burden,” but more in the sense of a deep commitment.

“People in urban areas either defined values in negative terms – what is not to be done – or defined them in terms of appearance and behaviour.”

On the other hand, people in urban areas either defined values in negative terms - what is *not* to be done - or defined them in terms of appearance and behavior. But perceived behavior is not an indicator of inner belief. A person may behave very politely but actually not have any respect. The sharp difference between urban/rural and literate/non-literate responses is worth further exploration.

That non-literate rural women distinguished between internal beliefs and behavior and also asked for the same distinctions to be taught in schools (*dikhane aur hone ka fark samjhao* “teach them to distinguish between appearing and being”) is significant. That non-literate village women talk of integrity, faith, and ethics in simple but operational terms speaks of a living and vital strength of the spirit.

When one gives greater value to behaviour or appearance, the source of one's strength/power shifts from within oneself to the outside. Hence, the “other” becomes the deciding factor, the touchstone by which one's values are measured. In this model, if one achieves a desired effect

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through hypocritical behavior, then one's purpose is served and ethics and values become irrelevant. What becomes important is what "others" believe about you and not how you actually are.

In addition, when values and ethics are only defined in negative terms (not stealing, not lying, etc.) they take the form of restraints on behavior which become a minimum level of achievement. This is the language of a punitive society: people must adhere to a minimum level, and if they fall below that level, the law will take care of them. This kind of value system is not conducive to harmony, which is the hallmark of a society at peace, with inner strength. Negative definitions of character can become ends in themselves. Then, the "ideal" government servant is one who does not *appear* to be corrupt. This is a tragedy, not only for the nation but also for personal growth.

There is no challenge to draw out the best within an individual when appearances become more important than being. The focus is on selfish, self-serving aspirations that do not consider the individual to be a functioning and vital part of a wider society.

On the other hand, if values and ethics are defined in positive terms (integrity, commitment, responsibility, etc.), individuals are encouraged to strive for higher goals. In this case, **appearance** takes a backseat; if the stress is on what happens within, on *hona* rather than *dikhna*, if the stress is on responsibility, commitment, and integrity, then the source of power remains within the self. The individual knows himself to be an integral member of a wider community. In this case, the yardstick of measurement is one's own conscience and not the "other".

The processes of urbanization and education in the current system seem to have shifted from *hona* to *dikhna*. In this context it is worth taking note

*"Gandhiji said about
our absence
of courage,
'We have "no"
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cannot say so.
We look at the
other man's face to
know whether
he wants
"yes" or "no" and
say what we think he would
like us to say'."*

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*"This faith was not
a blind faith,
but was born of a
conviction that if
they led a life
according to
dharma, it would
give them
tremendous
inner strength."*

of what Gandhiji said while addressing students at Allahabad on 30 November, 1920: "Lord Willingdon said that since his arrival from England, he had not come across a single Hindu or Muslim who had had the courage to say "no". The charge is true even today. We have "no" in the heart, but we cannot say so. We look at the other man's face to know whether he wants "yes" or "no" and say what we think he would like us to say. Here in this building, I could not make a little girl of three or four do my bidding. I asked her to sit on my lap, but she said, "no". I asked her if she would wear *khadi*, she said, "no". We do not have the strength which even this little girl has".

A non-literate rural woman expressed a strong commitment to ethical behavior or dharma when she said, "*mera avaguna mujhe khayega*" (my bad qualities will destroy me), and strong faith when she said, "*meri baat poori hogi*" (Whatever I believe, will happen). This study shows that the strong belief rural people have in integrity, honesty, sense of justice, etc. gives them a certain strength of character. This faith was not a blind faith, but was born of an inner conviction in one's own inner strength, and the belief that if they led a life according to dharma, it would give them tremendous inner strength. Honoring one's word (*vachan*) and the power that gives to the self was stressed by rural women.

The wisdom and confidence of these women is heartening in a world being consumed by the market. In a 1916 speech at Muir College, Gandhiji said that by "real progress" we mean "moral progress," which is "nothing but the progress of the eternal faith (*sashwat vishvas*) within us". And later, "...we can profit only if we keep our civilization and our morals straight." On another occasion, at the Second Gujarat Educational Conference, on 20 October 1917, Gandhiji said, "All education must aim at building character. I cannot see how this can be done except through

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religion. We are yet to realise that gradually we are being reduced to a state in which we shall have lost our own without having acquired the new". During the course of this study the rural women repeated the same sentiments. This sense of faith was conspicuously absent among the urban and literate people.

It is important to distinguish between relative and real confidence. Relative confidence derives its strength from "the other," not from possessing a particular knowledge, skill, or information. Real confidence is not dependent on anything external but derives from within, from one's intrinsic worth. There is a lack of real confidence among the educated in our country. Their apparent self-confidence is actually relative confidence, manifesting itself as arrogance, and a reluctance to work with one's hands. The wisdom of our non-literate women should prompt us to restore the lost integrity of our educational system so that our children can also enjoy real confidence.

It seems that the current educational system, rather than enhancing real confidence and self-esteem, has eroded it. There are instances in our colonial past which highlight this. Around 1875, Sir Richard Temple, British governor of Bengal, felt that the teaching of science would help curb the confidence of the educated Indian. Writing to then British Viceroy Northbrook, Temple observed, "Our higher education is too much in the direction of law, public administration, and prose literature, where they (Indians) may possibly imagine, however erroneously, that they may approach to competition with us. But we shall do more and more to direct their thoughts towards practical science, where they must inevitably feel their utter inferiority to us". Temple wrote this in 1875. In 1876, the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Sciences was established in Calcutta. And today, science is the strongest superstition among the literate.

"It prompts one to wonder if our present education system is in some way continuing to undermine the confidence of the people."

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It prompts one to wonder if our present education system, which is a legacy of our colonial past, is in some way continuing to breed hypocrisy and undermine the confidence of the people. Repeatedly, in this study, it came out that the largely urban, literate groups and males see the aim of education as getting a good job, and see the role of a teacher as limited to helping a child through competitive exams.

These views conform to the utilitarian view of education. The rural non-literate groups and women were in favor of a classical definition of education. They expected schools to teach children ethics and values, and felt that teachers should instill values by being role models themselves. This is a telling commentary. It shows how the educational system affects our attitudes and creates a system that focuses on economic rather than humanist issues.

"Only children and non-literates made a distinction between literacy and education. All others used the words 'education' and 'literacy' interchangeably."

Education Versus Literacy

During the course of this study, the only groups to make a distinction between literacy and education were children and non-literates. All other groups used the words "education" and "literacy" interchangeably. When the distinction between "education" and "literacy" is discarded, then literacy (reading and writing) becomes elevated and education (character-building and acquisition of knowledge) gets demoted. In the process, traditional knowledge, wisdom, and spirituality lose their importance and literacy becomes the only measure of an educated person. In a country like India, there are millions of men and women who possess traditional knowledge in medicine, architecture, water divining, agriculture and self-fulfillment. Many of them are non-literate. The equation of formal education and usefulness, or formal education and knowledge, could have devastating consequences for all of us, as skills and gifts are overlooked and taken for granted. Alternative knowledge and traditions should be incorporated into our school's curriculum.

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Livelihood Versus Job and Attitude To Manual Labour

Our study shows that people in rural areas have started questioning the aim of education, as it has failed to provide jobs for their children. Their expectations have become more realistic and practical.

The rural HIG group (roughly 50 per cent of whom are literate) largely favours jobs to traditional occupations (agriculture, manual labour). However, with increasing awareness of rising unemployment, they are reluctantly veering towards the view that their children should take up traditional occupations. Thus, the urban literate emphasised jobs while rural non literates, especially women, emphasised traditional occupations. The sharp criticism by rural women of jobs - *naukri ki jad pathar par* - and jobs being subject to the vagaries of market forces was most striking. However, at the same time, they wished that education would reduce the drudgery of manual labour.

The urban non-literate women were most articulate in their criticism of their educated children. They were proud of the fact that they themselves could work with their hands and as a result, despite being non-literate, could live better, and be more self-reliant than their literate/education children.

The low income rural people were found to be, by and large, self-reliant, both in economic and emotional terms. Since this group was directly concerned with issues of survival, they took a common-sense approach to most issues. There was no confusion about what they meant by "self-reliance". The non-literate LIG males were the only group to not have any expectations from their children, either financial (they did not talk of jobs) or emotional (they did not expect their children to look after them in their old age). They wanted their child to be self-reliant, which was defined by

"The urban non-literate women were most articulate in their criticism... they were proud of the fact that they were more self-reliant than their literate/educated children."

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the child's knowledge of farming and animal husbandry. They expected their child to be observant of details and to have a questioning spirit. The child must learn to observe and question details such as why a bull may be walking slowly or why a cow is not eating grass. On the other hand, the urban LIG men express self-reliance in negative terms - *baap ki roti na tode* (they should not live off me).

It was also significant that while the urban literates were more concerned with their children doing well in exams, the rural non-literates seemed concerned with "understanding of concepts" and development of analytical skills. They wanted education to give skills for children to discriminate between right and wrong - to not get swayed by the latest trends and to not get cheated - and the ability to make decisions.

The rural people made a distinction between 'job' and 'livelihood'. A job usually meant a desk job and a salary, while livelihood meant self-employment and was usually linked to traditional skills and working with one's hands. It is possible that urban people emphasised jobs because traditional livelihoods were no longer available to them in urban settings. But, we did see many educated rural youth refusing to work on farms or engage in traditional occupations. In fact, educated rural youth looked down upon anything connected with their village, tradition, and culture. That education lures people away from traditional occupations and manual work, towards the job market, was an often repeated complaint.

The demand of rural parents to include the teaching of traditional skills in school curriculum indicates that they realise education is failing in its promise to provide jobs or job-skills. Rural parents lamented the fact that not only did education not provide jobs but it also closed the option of youth returning to traditional occupations. This was mainly due to two factors: 1) school education breeds a sense of superiority among the

"Rural parents lamented the fact that not only did education not provide jobs, but it also closed the option of youth returning to traditional occupations."

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educated in relation to traditional occupations/manual labour; and 2) Education seems to be making people incapable of manual work, "*haat mein chhale par jate hain*".

The demand that schools teach traditional skills indicates the people's desire for alternative livelihood options. The inability of the literate to engage in manual labour seems to be a prime concern of all rural categories.

"Gandhiji said in 1916: After completing their schooling, instead of improving the quality of their traditional occupation, they look down upon it as inferior work. Very little thought has gone into the objectives of education."

This has surfaced periodically in different surveys, from different regions - from Janupur in the Himalayas to a village near the Bay of Bengal. During a research project in Bangladesh, rural women of Mymen Singh village were asked why they did not send their children to school. They promptly replied: "Educated children do not work with hands. If we send our children to schools, they stop listening to us. They will refuse to work in the fields. What will we eat then?" A similar reply was given to Professor P. C. Joshi when he asked parents of non-literate children during his fieldwork in rural Uttar Pradesh, why they did not send their children to school. The reply was, "They will become *babu sahibs* and refuse to go to the fields". The same sentiments were echoed in this study by a non-literate woman from Jaunpur: "I don't know whether our children will ever get jobs after school, but I know they will never go to their fields".

Of course, these questions regarding the relevance of education have been raised as early as the beginning of this century. In October 1916, Gandhiji's criticism of the present educational system in Samolachak in Gujurati: "Very little thought has gone into the meaning and objectives of education. The main objective is availing a job. We see children of the mason, the iron monger, the carpenter, tailor, cobbler, and of other occupations, attending schools. But after completing their education, instead of improving the quality of their traditional occupation, they look

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down upon it as inferior work and abandon it altogether. They consider it more prestigious to become clerks in offices. Even their parents think so”.

The status given to desk jobs is a critical issue. It is significant that although the modern education system professes to raise awareness about the exploitative nature of the traditional caste system, it hardly works toward providing prestige or dignity to the occupations or crafts identified with different castes. Instead, it gives dignity to clerical/desk jobs, and in the process creates a new hierarchy - a new *jati* of literate-superior (babus doing clerical work or those working a machine) and the non-literate-inferior (those working with their hands, either in farms or traditional occupations).

*“The modern
education system
hardly works towards
providing prestige
to traditional crafts...
instead it gives dignity
to the clerical desk
job – the new jati
of 'literate-superiors'.”*

Renowned national poet, Maithilisharan Gupt criticized modern education in his poem, *Shiksha ki Avastha*, published in his book "Bharat Bharati": *Dasatva ke parinam vali aaj hai shiksha yahan*, (our education results in slavery) or *Bigade hamare ab yahan svaadhin ke vyavasay hain* (our traditional occupations which fostered independence were destroyed as a result of modern education).

The dominant model of education is from the West. But alien systems do not work for the majority of our people. People have to leave their land, village, city, and country in order to “fit” into alien systems. Hence the brain drain. “Why blame our children?” said an HIG parent. “It is the whole system. We were meant to be, and still are, slaves. Macaulay succeeded. Our education system makes our children misfits.”

In this context, let us quote Gandhiji once again, “A gulf has been created between us and our families. To our parents, to others in our families, to our women, and to our domestics - with whom we live for the greater part of our time - our school education is as some hidden wealth. Its use is

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denied to them. It should be easy enough for us to see that where conditions are so unnatural, the people can never hope to rise. If we were not mere pieces of blotting paper, after fifty years of this education, we should have witnessed a new spirit in our masses. But we have no bond of understanding with them. They look upon us as modernised and keep away from us and we look upon them as an uncivilized lot and despise them."

"The charge leveled against us by some Englishmen, that we are mere imitators, is not entirely baseless... we take in only the superfluities, that is, the evils of Western Civilisation."

In the same lecture, he went on to say, "There is no continuity between schools and homes in India...Our youths learn one thing from parents at home and from the general environment, and another at school. The pattern at school is often found incompatible with that at home...The charge leveled against us by some Englishmen, that we are mere imitators, is not entirely baseless...As blotting paper absorbs the superfluous ink, even so we take in only the superfluities, that is, the evils of Western civilization".

A key issue is about the needs of the majority – whether these are synonymous with the needs of the country and hence should be the deciding factor for our policy planners in education, and for designing the school curriculum and training programmes. What has happened, it appears, is that we have neglected the needs of the majority and have cultivated an education system that serves a privileged minority. It should have been the other way around.

At the bottom of it all, lies the feeling of inferiority towards one's own culture and country. Unemployment is just the tip of this iceberg. Several studies have shown that there is no longer a guarantee of Science and technology often serve the purpose of, and enriches, only a very few. In the process, it widens the gap between the haves and the have-nots, in effect steadily disenfranchising and disempowering the majority in

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getting a job even after being a post-graduate. Several studies have shown that Kerala, which has the highest literacy rate, also has the highest unemployment and suicide rate in the country.

The complex relationship between education, jobs, and manual labour needs to be examined. The current system of education seems to alienate young people from their land and occupation ("your schools have certainly closed one door - that of returning to the fields") and made them full of contempt for anything local. At the same time, the current education system prepares each student to be a gluttonous consumer, a slave to market forces ("the schools have taught our boys to roam around the market places with their hands in pant pockets, wanting more clothes and more food").

"The current education system prepares each student to be a gluttonous consumer, a slave to market forces."

As an urban teacher stated, categorically, "The current system of education is the greatest tool of science and technology, which, in turn, is a tool of the (commercial) market."

This sentiment was repeated during a seminar organized by SIDH in May 1999 on "The Philosophy and Politics of Modern Science and Technology," attended by a diverse group of participants from different fields (academics, politicians, businesspeople, journalists, (NGOs). At the end of this seminar, there was general consensus: there is an undeniable link between education and modern science and technology. People agreed that:

- The system is based on a myth that science and technology exist for the greater good of mankind, while in fact, sometimes the opposite is true.
- Education is the most powerful tool for perpetuating the dominant paradigm. The sole objective of the current system of education is the transformation of the individual into an uncritical consumer.

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- An alternative paradigm needs to be thought out, declared, and disseminated, in order to empower the marginalised majority.

In such a scenario, where the international market dominates society, the demand of rural parents that their children become “good and caring,” and learn to respect their elders, may seem a little naive. But the fact that the majority of people have accepted that schools are no longer connected to jobs and are therefore asking for something else from schools is an encouraging sign: “If you cannot give jobs, at least make our children improve their behavior towards us!”

“It is vital to consider quality first, before perpetuating the same old system – one that has alienated and eroded the confidence of our youth.”

In the last fifty years, we seem to have come full circle. The market forces have marginalised the majority and this is driving people to question the most powerful tool of the system - the form and content of modern education. This readiness for change gives an opportunity to experts and policy makers in education. Now is the time to redefine quality. It is vital to consider quality, first, before plunging unthinkingly into improving access and perpetuating the same old system - one that has alienated and eroded the confidence of our rural and urban youth.

Difference between Barbad Hona And Bigadna

During the course of this study, while the urban parents lamented that their children have become spoiled (*bigad gaye hain*), the rural parents expressed their despair that their children have become ruined (*barbad*) by the education system. This is a significant distinction.

In urban areas, people have largely accepted the utilitarian role of education. They have no land holdings or an income source of their own, and so no longer expect their children to be self-employed. People here have learned to access and exploit education and the larger socio-political and economic system to their own advantage. Hence, they are only

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lamenting that the children have been spoiled, which is manifested in: 1) rude behavior towards their elders, and 2) spending beyond their means.

*“By cutting them
(rural children)
away from their
land and occupation,
education is seen
to destroy what
is a functioning
and beneficial
socio-economic
model.”*

For the rural community, however, the effect of such an education is quite severe (hence their description of *barbad ho gaye*) because what their children are losing is an already established system of self-sufficiency. By cutting them away from their land occupation, education is seen to destroy what is a functioning and beneficial socio-economic model – and converting them, instead, into dependent and insecure people. Job opportunities for rural people are significantly less than those for urban people. Rural people do not have the same access to a system of benefits. For instance, children in Bangladesh have said, “A non-literate person works very hard in the hot sun and carries heavy loads on his head in exchange for almost nothing. We also want to be educated like you. Do less work and get more money (*beshi taka alpo kaj*).” What is implied is that they would also like to use education as a tool to exploit the system, just as others have done before them.

Rural people are slowly realising that modern education has weaned their children away from traditional occupations. Thus, in rural areas, the modern education system has wrought complete devastation, leaving them neither here nor there.

Discipline, Rights, And Responsibility

Almost every group in the study raised the issue of discipline. Lack of discipline was a major concern. The outer forms of necessary discipline were expressed as: a fixed timetable in school, a fixed time at which school opens, arriving at school on time, saying morning prayers, cleanliness, wearing a school uniform, etc. There was a lot of emphasis on inner discipline among rural people.

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All parents, both rural and urban, were unhappy that schools do not create a sense of respect among children towards their elders - both parents and teachers. There were many issues raised by parents peculiar to the cultural beliefs of this country. For instance, issues of respect, care, concern, and gratitude towards elders are not usually linked to discipline in Western countries. Disciplining a child is considered part of learning by the majority of people in our country. All parents felt that the teacher must be strict and enforce discipline, although no one favoured beating children as a means of discipline. The majority also preferred the use of affection to motivate the child to behave in class.

*"We also want to be
educated like you.*

*Do less work
and get*

*more money
(beshi taka alpo kaj)"*

Today, it is generally believed that instilling love and responsibility in a child is not a function of education. This means that the responsibility of building social values lies outside the school. When one says, "responsibility for values and social education that was traditionally given by adults in communities is now passed to schools," it is often said in an accusing manner. But this conjecture is not entirely true. In the past, both the school and the parent together performed the role of a moral compass.

In the past, schools were much closer to communities. They did not alienate the child from his/her family. If schools alienate children from family, society, and traditions - as is evidenced by this study - then both the school and parents must take responsibility and work together to remedy the situation and teach the child values.

There seems to be a clear divide between two responsibilities of schools: to provide competency in literacy and numeracy; and to build character in the student. These two issues are presented as binaries, as either-or situations, with an underlying assumption that the school cannot be made responsible for developing both. Today, in rural areas, we have

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reached “minimum levels of expectation,” where parents are grateful if a teacher does not absent himself and does some activity in class.

India has an old tradition of *vidya*, or learning. *Vidya* includes: self-knowledge as the most important part of learning, which aims at transformation of a human being from an instinctive animal-like creature to a person with humane values working toward the realisation of self; where people revere the guru almost next to God; where the responsibility of the guru is an integral part of teaching; where the traditional pedagogy assumes that the role of the student is to question; where the word for responsibility is also given as *uttardayi*, which literally means answering questions. Surely, such a society cannot be judged by the rules of a different society governed by different values.

“There are cultural issues peculiar to this country. For instance, respect, care and gratitude are seen here as part of discipline, which may not be so in Western countries.”

The emphasis by parents (of all groups) on discipline and obedience, but without physical beating, is significant in the context of the debate around child-rights. It is worth quoting Gandhiji to clarify the point: “On the right occasion, you can raise against me, your parents and the whole world... one should, if need be, sacrifice one's parents, relations, and all others in *yagna*, undertaken in real sincerity of heart as Prahlad sacrificed his father...Your parents would say, “you should not leave schools,” and I say, “you should”. If you understand that what I am asking you to do is your dharma, tell your parents, respectfully, that you cannot attend your schools...what I say is not meant for students of ten or twelve years of age. They are not free to think for themselves. They should do their parents' bidding. According to our *shastras*, a child should be lovingly reared for five years, should be disciplined for ten years - disciplined not with physical punishment, but with instruction and persuasion - and a son of sixteen should be regarded as a friend.”

The concept of rights is mostly misunderstood. It is ultimately linked to

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the values and outlook of any given society. For instance, a basic Indian cultural value is the understanding of an individual as part of the larger community. It is, therefore, duty and participation in the larger scheme of things that is stressed – from this arises one's rights.

Our traditional unit of society was the joint family, which in turn was part of a larger community, where the assumption of responsibility was unquestioned. Now, with the breaking of that system in urban areas, there is confusion. Most Indian adults have clear memories of joint families and therefore have internalised a different value system. But, under the influence of the Western paradigm, children have moved towards an individualistic world view and away from a community view. The modern education system has encouraged this transformation.

"A basic Indian cultural value is the understanding of an individual as part of the larger community. It is, therefore, duty and participation in the larger scheme that is stressed – from this arises one's rights."

Decentralisation

The present study reinforces the need for decentralisation. There are many local issues that have far-reaching consequences on the enrollment and dropout rate of children.

All rural parents say that schools should be near the village. This is more important in hill villages. Even if a school is only one kilometer away, a small child could take as much as two hours to walk to school because of the hilly terrain. A school near home would not only boost the attendance of girls, but would ensure that parents could keep tabs on what is happening in school (whether classes are being held regularly, etc.). The local community's participation in schools would result in effective supervision and monitoring. This step could obviate the need for an army of government school inspectors.

Parents, especially rural, spoke about the frequent absenteeism of teachers and hence were in favor of local teachers. Teaching in single-

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teacher schools is often hampered when a non-local teacher stays in his/her own village or town, often leading to school closure. In the case of a local teacher, it would be easy for the community to keep a check on attendance of the teacher.

Rural parents complained that teachers are not responsible, concerned, or sensitive towards their students. Whether it is demanding quality teaching by making curriculum contextually relevant, or building a good relationship with students, it is significant that rural people want teachers to be role models. A local teacher is better suited for this. "Ankh ki sharam" or personal shame becomes important because a local teacher will be more receptive and sensitive to local pressures and issues. Rural communities are asking for small "guardian teachers," and not "professional teachers," and this is possible if the teachers are local.

"A local teacher is better suited because she will be more receptive and sensitive to local pressures and issues, and can also be role model for the students."

It was shocking that the expectation of a school teacher - to be a role model to the students - was very high, but the image of school teachers in many rural areas was not very high. This can only happen when the teacher is from a different area and has no relationship with the community. This can be seen as a scathing attack on India's monolithic government education system.

Moreover, if the teacher does not know the local dialect, he/she has problems of communication and is not able to explain difficult concepts to the students. We all know that initial years of schooling must be held in the mother tongue. In India, with so much diversity, it is impossible to have printed material in each dialect, but we can certainly appoint local teachers to interpret books in a more relevant manner. This will enhance the quality of education.

Rural parents have advocated the use of regional information, traditional wisdom and knowledge in the curriculum. This makes sense since

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"Students fail to make connections between what is taught in schools and their own, real lives... subjects can be easily taught through the local context (local vegetation, history, geography, agriculture and cultural practices)."

currently many students fail to make connections between what is taught in school and their own, real lives. Many subjects, certainly language, can be easily taught in primary schools through the local context (via themes such as local vegetation, history, geography, agriculture, and cultural practices). Even certain concepts of math, science, history and geography can be taught through information gained from local sources. This is being effectively done in SIDH- run schools where local youth are teaching. It is only possible in a decentralised system of education.

In SIDH- managed primary schools, which are highly appreciated by the community, all teachers belong to the local community. None of them are "qualified trained teachers" in the sense of holding the government certified B.Ed or BTC degree. Both in terms of student performance and community preference, these teachers fare far better than their trained counterparts in government schools.

This finding is in direct conflict with one of the core indicators as identified under the EFA2000 Assessment, where having a "trained teacher" is a positive indicator. A trained teacher normally indicates the mere holding of a government certificate.

In an area like the Jaunpur block or other hill village schools, where the size of the villages and hence number of students is small, the criteria of teacher-pupil ratio is irrelevant. The total number of students in a school can be as small as 20 to 25. But because these 20 students could be in as many as six classes (from KG to class 5) a minimum of 2 or 3 teachers are needed. Thus each teacher could be juggling 2 or 3 classes at any given time, which is a difficult feat to accomplish. So, although the teacher/student ratio may be 1:15 or even lower, still, the number of classes a teacher is handling is often a major factor affecting the quality of teaching. Therefore, a low teacher/pupil ratio does not necessarily

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translate into better quality teaching – other local conditions have to be understood.

Disparate Systems

“Despite avowed declarations like 'Education for all by 2000', we still have not fulfilled the most basic needs of rural areas... there is a glaring rural-urban inequity in the present system...”

The wide disparity between urban and rural needs (need for computers versus need for benches and reading material) and availability of infrastructural facilities shows that despite avowed declarations like “Education for All by 2000” we still have not fulfilled the most basic needs of rural areas. This shows the glaring rural-urban inequity of the present education system. Even within urban areas, inequity in the education system is reaching grotesque proportions. Five-star meals in air-conditioned classrooms at one end, and bare rooms with no furniture, toilet facilities, or teachers at the other. Rural schools are still short of basic necessities like proper buildings, proper seating arrangements, adequate number of teachers, reading-learning material, etc.

The demand in urban schools is for things like computers, library facilities and hobby classes. Recently there has been a clamour for sophisticated teaching-learning technologies in urban schools under the name of “smart schools”. This trend only serves to increase the disparity in the education system instead of reducing it. This disparity creates false aspirations among the underprivileged. And, at the same time, schools catering to the privileged are not producing students who make worthwhile contributions to society or country.

In fact, HIG parents of the privileged classes have shown great dissatisfaction with the way their children are shaping up in elite schools. The fact that parents in Mussoorie are removing their children from higher classes in elite schools and putting them in local schools is one of the most significant findings of the study. It not only indicates

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"The fact that some parents in Mussoorie are removing their children from higher classes in elite schools and putting them in local schools is a significant finding of this study."

dissatisfaction with the education system, but also reflects the increasing disparity in this country at every level (within HIG, MIG and LIG and between HIG and LIG). Among HIG, there are people who can afford to pay a fee of more than US \$10,000 per annum (Rs. 4.5 lakhs per annum at Woodstock, Mussoorie). At the other end, there are those who somehow manage to pay Rs 18,000 per annum. The children coming from these two ends of the spectrum are not able to compete with one another in the acquisition of consumer items and exploitation of resources, thus giving rise to discontent and unrealistic aspirations even among the HIG.

Materialistic aspirations of the LIG and rural people are normally moulded by the urban HIG. The rural/urban LIG/HIG all have materialistic or quantitative expectations of their schools - the difference between the groups being mainly one of degrees.

A sharp difference emerges when the groups discuss expectations of their children. The views are diametrically opposed - LIG, rural, women veering towards the classical ideal and HIG, urban, men, towards the utilitarian view of education.

The HIG and MIG parents stress proper school dress and daily prayer. This shows that for this class, external, physical elements are more important than curriculum. Their only expectation from teachers was helping students get through competitive exams. As literacy and income levels rise, people forsake core values in favour of economic ones. Rural LIG parents can be seen veering towards this materialistic view, an indication that the lower economic rungs of society imitate the higher. Non-literates, however, do not seem as enamoured with material elements as their literate counterparts. Policy makers should take heed. A similar study on community perspectives done in Bangladesh in 1998 was revealing. Children, when asked to draw literate and non-literate characters, drew a

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literate man with coat and tie, and a non-literate man carrying a heavy load on his head. When asked to define an educated person, the children answered "A person who earns more but does less work." In India, as in all third world countries with a colonial past, the most coveted schools are "English medium" schools - which are often more expensive than government schools. The teaching of English was another common expectation of a "good school" among respondents. It was taken for granted by urban HIG; every other group considered it, "the key to open all doors".

Where multiple standards exist in the education system, programmes designed for the underprivileged are universally perceived as being at the bottom of the heap. An alien system, which gets state and social recognition, has two outcomes. On the one hand, people lose confidence and the will to sustain their own indigenous system, which is perceived as inferior. On the other hand, people find themselves incapable of managing the alien system, which is perceived as superior. Multiplicity in educational standards - as opposed to diversity - thrives on disparity or inequality. As John Ruskin once said, "The force of the guinea you have in your pocket, depends wholly on the default of the guinea in your neighbor's pocket".

The disparity in education sustains itself on the myth that expensive urban middle-class Western education systems are beneficial and achievable for all. And even if it seems remote, this type of education is still coveted by all communities, as they all have increasingly less and less confidence in their own system. Community participation and support is essential for a good school, but this support is possible only when communities have faith in their own systems - not when they are forced to accept a system in the absence of any alternative. Community support in

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rural and slum areas is often half-hearted because parents see these schools as a last resort. Given the opportunity, they would rather put their children in a school which mimics the elite (English medium, Western dress, etc.).

In this context, some profoundly disturbing questions are:

- How can education be sustainable without widespread community commitment and support?
- Is community support possible without reducing disparities?

The study also indicates why we as a nation may have become imitators, copying without thinking. Indians want to copy the same external elements, the paraphernalia, but are dissatisfied with the product of the system. They are disappointed that education does not yield a job, yet they do not reject the education system. This confusion seems worse among the literate.

Gandhiji said, in his speech at Agra: "We are dazzled by the shining lustre of our chains and look upon them as symbols of our freedom. This state (of mind) bespeaks slavery of the worst kind". Speaking at the Second Gujarat Educational Conference, he said: "Our graduates, therefore, are a useless lot, weak of body, without any zest for work, and mere imitators. They suffer an atrophy of the creative faculty and of the capacity for original thinking and grow up without the spirit of enterprise and the qualities of perseverance, courage, and fearlessness. That is why we are unable to make new plans or carry out those we make".

Rhetoric and reality: "us" and "them"

Unfortunately, the current paradigm negates values and ethics in education. A recent report on basic education in India (PROBE 1999) is

"Community support and participation is essential for a good school, but this support is possible only when they have faith in their own systems... which is being eroded by the dominant worldview."

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one such example. It begins well, calling education a “social goal”. It says that we should not restrict “the focus of education policy to total literacy and that education is a much broader and demanding social goal”. It speaks of Tagore's stress on reflection being absent from standard curriculum. It also laments a tendency toward “acquiring specific mental skills that happen to be valued in the modern society”. Yet, having said all this, the report hardly makes a qualitative critique of the present education system and makes no attempt at constructive suggestions for change. It is, in appearance, good. It is, in actuality, useless. The difference between “hona” and “dikhna” strikes again.

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THE PROBE 1999 report, like others of its kind, is afflicted by a gap between rhetoric and reality. The report claims to be written from the standpoint of the underprivileged, who are excluded from the system. No effort is made to probe the education of higher income groups or the elite, as if everything is all right in the elite system - a system that gives more importance to the external, the quantitative, and not to values or qualitative factors, a system that drives the aspirations of the entire country.

Since colonial times, we've divided the world between “them” and “us,” once again not realising that the two are inter-related. The elite schools are the role models for all people regardless of class and rural or urban areas. There is also an assumption that the education imparted in privileged schools is what is needed and that all would be well if that could be replicated.

It is high time we took notice of the consequences of an alien system of education in a country like India. The greatest tragedy has been the complete alienation of our elite from the real problems of our country's majority. The elite speak and think in an alien tongue, divorced from the

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rural majority. Most of the elite are so busy imitating the influential West, that they're perhaps ignorant of their unintentional collusion with them. And it is these alienated people who make policies for the rural majority. No wonder, then, that nothing seems to work.

Concurrence of Views- Gandhiji and this Study

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Gandhiji's criticisms of the colonial system of education were primarily based on Western education's negative effect on Indian people and society. He was particularly concerned with the negative implications of English as the medium of education and the lack of relevant education for the rural masses. He felt that Western education was increasing polarization and producing lazy, uncreative, self-centered, and culturally alienated individuals. Gandhiji was also highly critical of equating education with economic gain. He saw that the colonial system was creating unreal and undesirable aspirations towards certain kinds of occupations, rather than addressing the realities of the majority engaged in traditional forms of livelihood. For the rural participant, education has been more destructive than constructive, as it has taught their children neither to earn a livelihood in their traditional occupation nor to have skills to get a job elsewhere.

Gandhiji devoted much attention to the implications of education in English, a foreign language. He recognised English-led education as breaking down bonds of family and culture and replacing them with a belief in the benefits of Western behaviour modeled as modern civilization. It is an insidious form of ideological conquest, probably more paralysing than rule by violence. It results in confusion, fear, insecurity, and lack of identity that prevents people from being able to be guided by their own traditions.

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The exclusion of one's own language and culture from the education system implies that they are inferior and unscientific. The continuity between knowledge of the home and knowledge of the school is broken, leaving a "segregated intellect".

"Education glorifies 'clean work', rather than teaching children the dignity of all forms of labour. This is particularly detrimental in a country where the majority are traditionally occupied with agriculture."

Instead of developing creative individuals, education in English is producing mere imitators. In our study, urban MIG parents saw English medium education as the main reason their children had become alienated from their families. This confirms Gandhiji's perception of the link between language and values.

Gandhiji felt that a major fault of modern education was the placement of emphasis on the development of the intellect or mind, creating a systemic bias towards mental work over manual work. Education therefore glorifies "clean work" rather than teaching children the dignity of all forms of labour. This, he pointed out, is particularly detrimental in a country where the majority are traditionally occupied with agriculture.

He felt that in India, it was essential that priority be given to basic primary education rather than specialised higher education, where there is a focus on extraneous information, memorizing, examinations and exam-related trauma.

CONCLUSION

*"The Hindi expression
'angreziat'
represents the desire
to be part of a
'ruling' class, and its
associated lifestyle
and mannerisms
– this was coveted
by only the elite
some years ago, it is
now being coveted
by all."*

There is a clear link between the larger socio-political-economic climate of a nation, and its education system. If the findings of this study prove without a doubt that the present education system is deeply flawed, then this is also an indication about the state of the Indian socio-political-economic system. Our governing elite is today blindly aping modern civilization, ignoring traditional thought, talent, livelihood and lifestyle of India, which has been the source of her strength and endurance for centuries. This aping is a result of unknowingly accepting the assumptions on which modern civilization is based upon. The same assumptions then permeate the education system.

The present education system does not help a student to get a job, it creates a literate class which generally contributes much less to society than their forefathers did. Professor A.K. Saran, in a proposal for an alternative school, said, "Independent India has maintained a profound continuity with the British India system of education. The British, it could be argued, designed it perhaps with the purposes of perpetuating, in one way or another, the loss of the Indian's dignity... but, now there is the conviction that the ruling elite of Independent India has inherited from its former Masters the task of strengthening the inertia and promoting intellectual degeneration, and it clings to this alien heritage with a vengeance; it is clear, therefore, no matter how loud or persistent our talk of radically changing the inherited educational structure, there is no prospect whatsoever of any real transformation being effected by the ruling party and cultural elite".

Most teachers seem unaware of any meaningful world view that serves as

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a guiding vision. In the absence of any world view or clarity about assumptions of education, the schools are carrying on activities which have resulted in:

- a. The teacher (and parent) feeling that a clerical naukri is superior to farming or craft or any kind of productive work.
- b. The teacher discouraging or dismissing knowledge that exists with the students, creating a sense of inferiority in them.
- c. Schooling becoming a method of attaining to an 'upper class' which 'earns easy money without doing much work'.

Is this a continuation of colonial education which was designed make us feel useless, inferior and dependent?

So education is being recognised by many as an instrument of enslavement. We have come a long way indeed from a culture which defined education as a liberating process (sa vidya ya vimuktaye). But Gandhiji was hopeful: "It is not difficult to change the present trends of education. Public opinion must be in favour of this change. The government will have no option but to introduce these changes." The task is difficult. Now, after 60 years of mindlessly following the colonial system, it seems that those who are victims of this enslavement have themselves become its advocate. This in turn has become a tool in the hands of those actively promoting the modern worldview. But the question still remains – should we perpetuate the same mindset, the same assumptions or is it about time that we questioned these assumptions. Our textbooks, the omni present advertisements, are defining "development", 'who is developed', 'who is backward', in a mindless manner. The Hindi expression angreziat represents the desire to be part of a 'ruling' class, and its associated life style and the mannerisms – this was coveted by only

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*We need to de-link the
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other language."*

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"There is a distinction between value which is intrinsic to a unit, and (false) value which is an imposition. For instance, the value of a piece of clothing is its ability to protect our body. This is intrinsic to any clothing, but whether the piece of clothing is in fashion or not, is an imposition."

the elite some years ago, is now being coveted by all. But this desire (for angreziat) gets articulated as demand for knowing English. Ultimately it does no good except infusing low self-esteem and a feeling of inferiority in what is ours. We need to de-link the two – angrezi and angreziat. English should be treated simply as a means of communication, which it is, like any other language. And if there is a need for teaching English, we can make serious effort to teach good English, but not at the cost of the local language. But angreziat has to be challenged by exposing the (false) assumptions which are an imposition.

We need to make a distinction between a) true (*nirapeksha*) self confidence, which comes from knowing, from the ability of critical examination, from the ability of not being impressed (as different from inspired) and thus not coming under undue influence of the other; and b) relative (*sapeksha*) confidence, which comes from a deep sense of inferiority propelling us to imitate the other and then comparing ourselves with the other - based on criteria (which are basically imposed assumptions) set by others. This (*sapeksha*) confidence is not stable, it leads to either impressing the other or coming under the influence of the other, while *nirapeksha* confidence is stable, makes us free, relaxed and unself-conscious. Education must give us this stable (*nirapeksha*) confidence. At the moment it is giving no confidence and if at all it is giving any confidence, it is false - (*sapeksha*) or relative confidence – and only to a few privileged.

'Values' is another issue that needs to be taken seriously. Value is distinct from price. We are certainly not advocating teaching values in the preaching mode or as a sermon but as something which is embedded in every unit in existence. This embeddedness can be shown – therefore can be taught. There is a distinction between value which is intrinsic to a unit

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and (false) value which is an imposition. For instance the value of a piece of clothing is its ability to protect our body. This is intrinsic to any clothing but whether the piece of clothing is in fashion or not, is an imposition. As there is intrinsic value in all objects, so there are intrinsic values in human beings. Our children can be taught these distinctions. This manner of education would give rise to *nirapeksha* confidence.

There is need to have focus on understanding rather than the present kind of learning, and a shift from information towards knowledge. Additionally, we need to re-emphasise role and values of hand skills and hand-based production, without which human education is seen to be incomplete. We can surely strive towards an integral education where living itself is a part of the student's learning curriculum – providing together, understanding as well as local traditional skills of productivity.

SIDH, too, believes that given the right direction, education could turn towards upholding humanitarian values and result in a peaceful and fearless society. Our study proves that, today, public opinion is in favour of such a change in education – may be it always has been, but never listened to.

It is with this hope that an alternative model of education has been conceived and proposed in SIDH. A space called Bodhigram: for like-minded people to explore and rebuild an ethics-based education, to bring children closer to our culture and the needs of our country, a place where young leaders can unlearn their assumptions, become sensitive, dignified, responsible and courageous, and lead us toward a better future for India and the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the following for policy-makers and educators:

1. We need to be clear about the purpose of education. We must then examine the (hidden) assumptions behind the present education and see whether it is leading us towards individual and collective self-reliance or making us more dependent. The teacher must be facilitated to be aware of the purpose of education, and to see the link that exists between what happens in the classroom and what ends up as society.
2. There is a strong case for de-centralisation of the education system, particularly its curriculum. Surely, one cannot impose a standard, country-wide or even a state-wide curriculum for a nation so diverse in geography and culture. This diversity is our splendour, it is our treasure, and the content of school education may be designed around the local environment, giving due place to the local language.
3. The school can be made a repository of local knowledge – data on rainfall, temperature, on flora and fauna of the area, the soil, the demography – human and cattle population of the area; the livelihood patterns, different crafts and artisans in the area, how the economics of the area runs, the role of monetized economy in the area (there are communities who rely minimally on money for their basic needs as they are producers of these basic requirements); what is produced in the area, the different cropping patterns and its relationship with the local calendar system, the yield of different crops and how these compare with all India figures; knowledge about local water bodies and understanding of our relationship with and dependence on these water bodies, the local knowledge systems – farming practices, knowledge of traditional seeds, herbs, healing practices; knowledge about local proverbs, phrases, folk lore, myths,

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legends, local heroes and heroines. All this can be done with the help of teachers (as learners) and the student by designing projects as appropriate to different age groups. These projects will automatically shift the focus to knowing and naturally integrate different subjects.

4. Incorporating traditional skills and indigenous knowledge systems into curriculums. This will impart exposure and skills to the child to enable him/her to earn a livelihood. It will reduce dependency, insecurity and job-related anxiety.
5. This study needs to be duplicated in other regions, too. Future studies may try to ascertain, among other things: a) Impact of education on children, b) Whether education plays a role in alienating children from family, society, traditions, etc., and if so, how can the curriculum and system be changed to suit the specific needs of specific communities c) Whether education has taken people away from their traditional occupations, and, if so, if it has provided (and how) an alternative, d) Whether there is a contradiction between people's desire for a value-based education and their demands from school.

METHOLOGY

Appendix 1

Broad objectives

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To study the impact of the current system of education (via parents, students, and teachers) on social values and behavior in urban and rural areas of Uttarakhand.
2. To identify disjuncture in parents' expectations for a school and the kind of education their children actually receive.
3. To identify disparity in the expectations of parents/teachers for children, and how the children actually behave.
4. To identify the dilemmas and pressures of parents, in terms of schooling their children.
5. To make a set of recommendations for national planners and policy-makers of elementary education, in order to make the present-day schooling more relevant, useful and enriching.

Phase 1

- Identification of the parameters of a 'good school'.
- Identification of the parameters of a "successful school".
- The differences and similarities between the two, and any significant patterns in people's perceptions, according to gender, income, and urbanisation.

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Phase 2

Orientation:

An orientation session for the research team was conducted by Anuradha. Objectives of the study and its relevance in today's social and political climate (as an advocacy tool) were evaluated. In the field, the need for this research became the basis of the introductory before each individual interview or FGD. The target group and its details (see section on sampling and also Appendix 2) were discussed, and parameters for selecting the high income group (HIG) and low income group (LIG) in both rural and urban areas, decided. The importance of team spirit was emphasized.

Training:

All three team members had been trained in qualitative research methods and had prior experience of data collection in the field. However, a refresher course was conducted in qualitative research methods, with special emphasis on listening skills, open-ended questions, and raw data; a workshop in data-analysis was also conducted. At this juncture, we received some timely suggestions from Amod Khanna, an expert in applied research in education, and Glynnis George, an anthropologist from Canada engaged in post-doctoral research. Both gave useful suggestions about practically achieving the objectives, through simple yet effective methods.

Management of raw data:

Techniques of recording the raw data of interviews and FGD's were shared with the team. They were asked to work in pairs and to always have a de-briefing session after each interview, to record their personal observations, non-verbal signals of participants, and feelings or insights gained. Meticulous records were kept, and wherever possible, an audio recorder was used during interviews and FGDs.

Review and Supervision:

The team was asked to keep records of their problems, suggestions and learning at the end of each day. As Jagmohan had the most research experience, he was asked to hold

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review sessions for the rural area, and Anuradha for the urban area, where problems and difficulties were discussed and sorted out.

Phase 3: Pre-test and Subsequent Change

As a result of further discussions within the research team, the objectives were re-formulated. An exercise to convert the questions into simple, everyday language (based on the profile of the target group) was conducted. At this stage, it was decided to drop Dehradun and concentrate only on Mussoorie. After a presentation to senior SIDH members, a topic guide was prepared and a tentative schedule for a pre-test was finalised. A pilot survey was conducted before the actual survey got underway, so as to sensitise the investigators to problems, to help them develop interview skills and guide them on how to do in-depth probing.

Through the pre-test, it was discovered that respondents made no distinction between a “good” school and a “successful” education; they perceived a cause-effect relationship between “good” and “successful”. A good school was successful, and vice versa. Hence, the aim of the research was re-defined as exploring people’s perceptions about a “good” school, as well as its relevance and impact upon children. The objectives of the study were then limited to studying the impact of education on social values and behavior. Parent expectations - of schools and of their children -were also added to the list. It was also found that literacy played a significant role in responses. So this variable was added to the list: income, locations, and gender. The pre-test also revealed that it was necessary to define a middle-income group. According, the parameters of the income group were modified.

Phase 4: Development of field strategy

As the survey was qualitative in nature, five open-ended questions were selected (See Appendix 3). A topic guide was designed to help the facilitators. The facilitators were asked to be alert towards all judgmental responses, and to probe these in greater depth. The questionnaire had space for reporting the personal comments of the

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facilitator on verbal and non-verbal responses of the participants. Demographic data (name, age, sex, number of members in the household, number of children, children going to school, income from various sources, etc.) were also recorded. We started with the rural areas, deciding to conduct a mid-term review before continuing on to urban areas. Both FGD's and interviews were used for collecting qualitative information. The research team consisted of a reported who notes down all information, verbatim, and a facilitator who led the discussions. The discussions were also recorded on audio, except where participants objected.

The sequence of activities at this stage were as follows:

- 1) Preparing a Topic guide for FGDs, for the different sections of the target group.
- 2) Identifying and listing the participants for the FGDs, and asking their preference of time and place for FGDs.
- 3) Preparing the site, time, and material, for the FGDs.
- 4) Informing the participants about the time and venue of the FGDs, and getting their confirmation.
- 5) Conducting the FGDs.

The data collection took place between November 1998 and March 1999. The interviews were conducted either at home or at school. The FGDs were conducted at SIDH's training centre at Kempt. The target groups were informed about the purpose of the visit, followed by the FGD and interview session. At the end of every month, a presentation was given to senior SIDH members and the feedback received was incorporated.

Phase 5: Analysis of Data and Report Writing

The raw data was analysed according to majority and minority responses and then compiled. Responses of each group, according to age, literacy, gender, income, and urban/rural areas, were compared within the group and with other groups.

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Representative quotes were collected and some patterns identified. An eight-day workshop was held for analysing the data, which was then presented in a one-day workshop to senior team members. Based on the feedback received, the team members visited the field again, for three days, to fill in the gaps. Another nine-day workshop was held to complete the analyses, after which the report was written. The raw data reports (interviews and FGDs) are available separately.

Sampling

The sample included parents, children, and teachers from both rural and urban areas. The total number of respondents was 168 (For details see Appendix 2). They were divided into the following categories:

Notes From The Field

At the end of the research, the team reviewed their work and made suggestions for use in a follow-up or replicated study.

The crucial issue for the field researchers was to extract the true feeling of the respondents. The difficulties faced were:

- Women are always busy and hard-pressed for time. They could not spare much time for discussions.
- Since the researcher was a local person, a lot of things were taken for granted. Also, feeling comfortable with the researcher, respondents would often go off topic and get involved in local gossip or arguments unrelated to the topic being discussed.
- In FGDs, one person would dominate the group and the others would keep silent, either out of respect for that other person, or because they had not thought about the issue themselves.
- Sometimes the respondents, especially rural government teachers, would get defensive and not give honest answers.

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Suggestions of the team were:

- Use the interview method for people who do not open up in group discussions.
- Respondents who get defensive must be handled sympathetically.
- The use of an audio recorder may distract respondents. Hence, if the equipment is kept out of sight, it eases the flow of conversation.
- For interviews, it helps if the place and time are communicated to the respondents, beforehand.
- The relevance of the research must be clearly communicated to the group, and they must be convinced of said relevance. This will result in honest and fruitful discussions.
- It is important for the researcher to be highly motivated.

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STUDY AREA

Appendix 2

The survey was conducted in the Jaunpur Block of Tehri district. Jaunpur is a tribal block in the northwest part of Tehri district and is about 20 kilometers from Mussoorie.

The local population mainly comprises of the Khasa community, who claim to be descendants of the Pandavas, the legendary heroes of the epic Mahabharat.

Characteristics of Jaunpur

Jaunpur has 259 villages organized into 89 gram sabhas. The villages are small, scattered and thinly populated (consisting of 12-50 households). Villagers have small landholdings and terrace cultivation is the only option.

The economy relies largely on agriculture and animal husbandry. There is a government school in every gram sabha; however, due to the small size of hill villages, a gram sabha could mean a cluster of 6-7 villages.

Very often the nearest school could be a 3-hour climb, which is physically demanding for a small child. This leads to high drop-out rates. In the case of girls, because of the time spent away from home, they are discouraged from attending school.

A few schools run by SIDH and Shishu Mandir are the only private schools in the area. Literacy level in Jaunpur is 16 per cent for women and 62 percent for men.

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Basic Statistics About Jaunpur

Demography	
Area (in Sq. Km.)	485
No. of Inhabited Villages	252
Total Population	50,337
No. of Households	8,249
Male Population (%)	50.65
Female Population (%)	49.35
SC Population (%)	18.84
ST Population (%)	0.61
Population Density (Persons/sq. km.)	104

Literacy Figures	
Total Literacy (%)	38.9
Male Literacy (%)	61.46
Female Literacy (%)	15.36
No. of govt. Primary Schools	126
No. of Teachers in Primary Schools	181
No. of Female Teachers	31
SC/ST Students in Primary Schools (%)	11.35

Basic Amenities	
No. of PHCs	3
Allopathic Hospitals & Dispensaries	4
Family and Child Welfare Sub-Centre	17
Veterinary Hospitals	5
No. of Electrified Villages	202
No. of Post Offices	21
No. of Villages Having Piped Water Supply	248

Sources : Census of India 1991, Sankhiki Patrika 1993 and Education for All 1993.

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Basic Statistics of Surveyed Villages

S. No.	Name of Village	No. of House-Holds	No. of Males	No. of Females	Total Population
1.	Kandi Talli	21	134	151	285
2.	Gadkhet	16	76	74	150
3.	Sadab Tala	35	146	145	291
4.	Riyat Gaon	20	103	75	178
5.	matela	16	68	61	129
6.	Nautha	18	53	42	95
7.	Bhediyan	25	96	87	183
8.	Sadab Malla	18	92	78	170
9.	Banogi	6	38	42	80
10.	Bhatoli	19	97	104	201
11.	Sainji	26	145	148	293
12.	Ghairyala	40	130	125	255
13.	Bel Talla	15	66	69	135
14.	Talogi	8	48	49	97
15.	Siya Kempty	12	40	35	75
16.	Banglon ki Kandi	70	208	206	414
17.	Bel mala	17	71	86	157
18.	Parogi Malla	12	56	49	105
19.	Parogi Talla	6	23	19	42

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TARGET GROUP

Appendix 3

The sample consisted of teachers, parents, and children from urban and rural areas. Teachers were selected from both government and private schools. Parents of children studying in secondary school (Class 6-10) were selected.

Parents were divided into three categories: Low Income Group (LIG), Middle Income Group (MIG), and High Income Group (HIG).

For urban areas, a household having a monthly income between Rs. 7,500 and Rs. 15,00 was classified as HIG.

For rural areas, a household satisfying any three of the following four criteria was classified as HIG:

- 1) Owning a motor vehicle
- 2) Owning a *pucca* house with a living room to entertain guests.
- 3) Owning a telephone or television
- 4) Owning a shop with a daily sale of Rs. 700 to Rs. 1,000 throughout the year.

A household satisfying any three of the following four criteria was classified as LIG:

- 1) Small landholding (sufficient agricultural produce for only six months).
- 2) *Kuccha* house with only one or two small rooms
- 3) Total cash income from all sources less than Rs. 2,500 per month.
- 4) More than six people in the household

Any household not falling in the above two categories was classified as MIG. The sample sizes were as follows:

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Total No. of Parents 72

Male (42)			Female (30)		
Rural (30)	Literate	18		Literate	2
	Illiterate	12		Illiterate	13
	HIG	14		HIG	6
	MIG	5		MIG	5
	LIG	11		LIG	4
Urban (12)					
	Literate	12		Literate	12
	Illiterate	0		Illiterate	3
	HIG	3		HIG	5
	MIG	5		MIG	6
	LIG	4		LIG	4

Total No. of Parents 72

Rural (34)				Urban (34)			
HIG	10	School-Going	21	HIG	8	School-Going	21
MIG	7	Dropout	7	MIG	7	Dropout	11
LIG	17	Illiterate	6	LIG	8	Illiterate	6

Total No. of Teachers 35

Rural (22)			
Govt. School	6	International School	4
NGO School	7	Govt. School	5
Shishu Mandir	6	Missionary School	4
Private Eng. Medium	3		

PROBE QUESTIONS

Appendix 4

- 1) What is a good school?
- 2) What expectations do you have for your child?
- 3) Is there any difference in your expectation between boys and girls?
- 4) What is the difference between a literate person and a non-literate person?
- 5) What do you mean by bigadna or barbad hona?

The above set of questions were merely a general guide for the facilitator. Each question led to a further series of probing questions (as many as 15-20). Every time the respondent made a value judgment, an attempt was made to define all value judgments in operational terms. For instance, whenever an adjective or adverb was used, like 'good school' or 'good human being' 'right conduct', etc, we probed further to elicit what the respondent meant by these phrases, and give examples.

It was decided to have an unstructured format with open-ended questions. This was done so that the differences in response could emerge spontaneously, and prevent stereotyped and cryptic responses (that are often given as answers to leading/structured questions). This method helped us to collect rich, qualitative data that revealed the differences in perceptions and priorities of the people from different categories.

QUOTES FROM THE FIELD

Appendix 5

These are some of the majority responses.

ग्रामीण उत्तर

निम्न आय वर्ग निरक्षर महिला

“अनपढ़ फटाफट काम करते हैं। चाय पिओ ओर कहते हैं, चलो। बैठते नहीं हैं। खड़े-खड़े चाय पीए और गए काम को। ‘जो बर्बाद अ, खां रोटी अर लगे घर फूण्ड घूमणै।’ अनपढ़ घर पर खाता, जीता है। पढ़ा लिखा नहीं। ढगारे और पेड़ पर नहीं जा सकता, पढ़ा लिखा।”

“टीचर शुद्ध होगा, बच्चे ठीक होंगे। बच्चों के ‘मन के रिकार्ड’ से चाल चलन भी ठीक होगा। धर्मी की जड़ हरी-हरी। जिसने बुरा किया उसका काम अठका।”

निम्न आय वर्ग साक्षर पुरुष

“पढ़ा-लिखा चाहता है कि अफसर बने। इसलिये घास नहीं काटे, बैस नहीं पाले। घर पर भी भतेरे धन्धे हैं, खेती, ठेकेदारी, बिजनेस, पर से सब नहीं करना।”

“पढ़ा-लिखा अगर चोरी नहीं करे, बीड़ी सिगरेट नहीं पिए, जुआ नहीं खेले, आदर करें सच्चाई से खाए कब्जा न डाले, बुरी नियत न डाले, ईमानदार बने, चोर, डकैत न बने, प्रेम से उठना बैठना सीखे। तो पढ़ाई काम की है, नहीं तो.....”

“पढ़े-लिखे को शर्म आती है कि मैं घास काटूं ? बैस पालूं ? रोटी के भी मोहताज रहते हैं वे, क्योंकि छोटी-मोटी नौकरी नहीं करनी, पढ़े-लिखे को। ज्यादा बर्बाद वही हैं क्योंकि नौकरी मिलती नहीं। नौकरी नहीं तो कुछ भी कर सकते हैं। कोई नहीं सिखाता कि घूमो। काम न करो। तनाव में रहें। पैसा भी करते हैं, कमाते भी नहीं। अनपढ़ सब कर सकता। नौकरी भी। तेज दिमाग है तो नौकरी मिल ही जाती है। ‘सारी उमर अनपढ़ ज़ाब काटी सक’।”

“अनपढ़ घर संभालता है। ‘उसकी खातर कोई आच्छो चीज न होई’। अनपढ़ आगे-पीछे देखेगा क्योंकि घमण्ड

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नहीं है। पढ़ा-लिखा बिगड़ सकता है क्योंकि घमण्ड है। अनपढ़ त्योंहार में पीता है, काम छोड़कर नहीं। पढ़े-लिखे अधपढ़े हैं। न घर के, न घाट के। वे कहते हैं मुझे नेता बनना है। काहे को काटूं घास, काहे को पालूं भैंस, काहे का चलाऊँ हल। मिट्टी को हाथ नहीं लगाते पढ़े-लिखे।

निम्न आय वर्ग निरक्षर बच्चे

“अनपढ़ का खेती बाड़ी में ध्यान है। ‘मेरी खेती है’ वह कहता है। अनपढ़ अपने बच्चों पर अधिक ध्यान देता है कि वह पढ़ हैं कि नहीं। फटे कपड़े पहनने में शर्म नहीं।”

मध्य आय वर्ग निरक्षर महिला

“अनपढ़ जिम्मेदारी के साथ घर का काम करता है पर पढ़ा-लिखा धूमता फिरता रहता है। ‘पढ़ी-लिखी तो आपड़ स्टैन्डर्ड मिजे खं। अनपढ़ छोरी त उठाणी दातुड़ी पग्यूणी सीधी घास जान्दी’।”

मध्य आय वर्ग साक्षर पुरुष

“पढ़ा-लिखा सिर्फ अपने को देखता है। अनपढ़ अपने व्यवसाय को देखता है। पढ़ा-लिखा देखता है अपनी कोट, पैन्ट। अनपढ़ को पेड़ों, गाय, भैंस को देखता है, गोबर साफ करना है। कुछ पढ़े-लिखे घर में काम नहीं करते, बॉस बने रहते हैं। पढ़े-लिखे अधिक व्यसन करते हैं।”

मध्य आय वर्ग बच्चे

“अनपढ़ को चम्मच से खाना नहीं आता पर अनपढ़ झूठ कम बोलते हैं। पढ़े-लिखे झूठ बोलते हैं। अनपढ़ को घास काटने में शर्म नहीं, कोई भी काम कर लेगा।”

“अनपढ़ अगर कुछ भी नहीं करेगा तो कम से कम अपनी खेती-बाड़ी, पशुपालन का काम तो ठीक ढंग से करेगा। पढ़ा-लिखा बोझा उठाने में शर्माता है। लेकिन नुकसान हमारा है। अब देखो, बलदेव (अनपढ़ लड़के का नाम) की ताकत कितनी है? हर जगह काम करने जाता है। हमें तो आलस्य है पर उसकी कसरत हो रही है। तन्दरुस्त है। पढ़ा-लिखा ज्यादा बेईमान होता है। सोच समझकर घोटाले करता है।”

A Matter of Quality

उच्च आय वर्ग निरक्षर महिला

“बच्चों को सच्चाई सिखाएँ, ईमानदारी और बड़ों की इज्जत करना सिखाएँ। किताबें गुण की हो, अवगुण की न हो की न हो। मेरा अवगुण मुझे खायेगा। मैं गलत करूँ तो भगवान को क्या बोलूँ ? मुझ पर लोगों का विश्वास है, क्योंकि जब कहती हूँ कि घास काटूंगी, तो काटूंगी।”

“पढ़े-लिखे चोरी न करें। उठाकर न ले जाएं, मांग के ले आयें। ये नहीं, कि सब अपने खातिर हो। जन सेवा भी करें। पैसा हो लेकिन, पहले सही शिक्षा दें। गरीब का छीनकर न खाएं। बच्चों से क्या उम्मीद रखें। उनकी किस्मत ले जाएगी उन्हें।”

“गाँव का पढ़ा-लिखा शहर में और शहर का पढ़ा-लिखा विदेश में ‘फिट’ होता है।”

“स्कूल हमारे बच्चों को नौकरी दे पायेंगे यह तो मालूम नहीं। पर इतना तो स्कूलों ने कर डाला, कि हमारे पढ़े-लिखे बच्चे कभी नहीं कर पायेंगे।”

उच्च आय वर्ग निरक्षर पुरुष

“अनपढ़ को नौकरी न हो तो घर की खेती है। काम है। बी.ए., एम.ए. करके ढंग से भैंस पालना चाहिए और ढंग से घास काटना चाहिए। गुरुजी ऐसा तो नहीं सिखाते कि नौकरी न मिले तो कुछ मत करो।”

“पढ़े-लिखे ‘अच्छी’ नौकरी ही करेंगे। पर नौकरी कम मिलती है। पढ़े-लिखे ज्यादा बर्बाद हैं क्योंकि नौकरी का ठिकाना नहीं - घास काट सकते नहीं। अपने मिजाज में रहते हैं। पढ़ा-लिखा न गोबर उठायेगा, न घास। उम्मीद है कि काम कि काम लिंगा और उसी में वह घूमता है। अच्छा कपड़ा पहनता है, अच्छा खाना खाता है। पेड़ में चढ़ नहीं सकता। हाथों में जल्दी छाले पड़ते हैं। अनपढ़ हर जगह फिट होता है। क्योंकि अनपढ़ उदास है कि मैं अनपढ़ हूँ, इसलिये कोई न कोई काम ढूँढता है। काम करने के जिद है उसमें।”

उच्च आय वर्ग बच्चे

“पढ़े-लिखे बीड़ी, तम्बाकू आदि नशीले चीजों का सेवन अधिक करते हैं तथा अनपढ़ कम करते हैं। आजकल अनपढ़ को पता नहीं कि गुटका कौन सा चला है। यह पहले पढ़े-लिखे को ही पता चलेगा।”

“अनपढ़ लोग ज्यादा काम करते हैं और पढ़े-लिखे कम। यदि सभी लोग पढ़े-लिखे हो जाय, तो मुझे लगता है कि घर में कोई काम करने लायक नहीं रहेगा।”

A Matter of Quality

स्कूलों से विलग बच्चे

“पढ़े-लिखे के काम करने में छाले पड़ते हैं - अनपढ़ के नहीं। अनपढ़ के नहीं। उनपढ़ बेझिझक मजदूरी कर लेगा।

“पढ़े-लिखे को अहम् होता है। अधिक बिगड़ता है। शराब पीता है।”

“तेछे त करो पढ़ाय अर बाद मों उ घर दासू पीया”

बुजुर्ग साक्षर पुरुष

“अनपढ़ तोकर काम, पढ़े-लिखे फिरान्दे पैन्ते। पहले पढ़ाई के बाद कोई पटवारी, कोई डी०एम० बनते थे, अब बेकार घूमते हैं। पढ़ा-लिखा को चाहिये अच्छा खाना, अच्छा घूमना और अच्छी चीजें खरीदना - बिना काम किये। पढ़ा-लिखा अहंकार से भरा, बड़े बूढ़े का आदर नहीं करता। आज की सास, बहू को चाय बना कर देती है। पढ़ा-लिखा जिम्मेवार नहीं। अनपढ़ जानवरों को देखता है। हमारे जमाने में पढ़े-लिखे लोग बिगड़ते नहीं थे। इसलिये पढ़े-लिखे की इज्जत होती थी, आज नहीं।”

निम्न आय वर्ग निरक्षर महिला

“हम अनपढ़ अच्छे। हम जानते हैं कि पढ़ाने से जोखिम बढ़ता है पर पढ़ा रहे हैं क्योंकि सभी पढ़ा रहे हैं। हम अनपढ़ किसी पर बोझ नहीं बनती, न मालिक पर, न बच्चों पर। हम भूखे नहीं मरेगें। किसी की नहीं सुनते। सुसराल की, न मालिक की। हमारी बेटियां रोएंगी। नौकरी न मिलेगी तो काम भी नहीं कर सकती। न नौकरी होगी न काम कर पाएंगी। हाथ से काम कर, हम गाय का दूध-दही बच्चों को देते हैं। पढ़ाई में उम्र चली जाती है। नौकरी जब मिलती है तब क्या करते हैं बच्चों ? कुछ नहीं। पढ़ाई से लालच, घमण्ड और गुस्सा है वह भी पढ़ी लिखी। पहले ऐसा नहीं होता था। परम्परा टूट गई। शिक्षा से कोई जेठानी से पर्दा नहीं करता। इनमें हम अनपढ़ अच्छे।”

निम्न आय वर्ग बच्चे

“पढ़ा-लिखा काम कम, टालता ज्यादा है। हाथ से काम के समय कहता है, - इसलिए पढ़ाया हमें ? पढ़ने वाले को मेहनत न करने का लाइसेन्स मिलता है। अनपढ़ काम से मतलब रखता है। अनपढ़ घमण्ड नहीं करता। पढ़ा-लिखा कहता है मुझे ज्यादा आता है। घमण्ड करता है। भाई लोग कहते हैं कि हमने ऐसी नौकरी के लिए पढ़ा है ? उन्हें स्टैन्डर्ड की नौकरी चाहिये। अनपढ़ हृदय साफ रखते हैं। अनपढ़ लोग, पढ़े-लिखों से ज्यादा खुशी दे सकते हैं, माँ-बाप को, क्योंकि वे माँ बाप की इज्जत करते हैं।”

A Matter of Quality

मध्य आय वर्ग साक्षर महिलाएँ

“अनपढ़ को वास्तविक ज्ञान आता है, पढ़े को किताबी ज्ञान। अनपढ़ समझदार होता है। अनपढ़ की याददाश्त तेज होती है।

मध्य आय वर्ग पुरुष

“पढ़े-लिखे ज्यादा अपराधी बनते हैं। आर०डी०एक्स० तोड़ना-जोड़ना उन्हें ही आता है। चोरी, डकैती पढ़े-लिखे ज्यादा करते हैं। पढ़े-लिखे में कुण्डा अधिक है। पढ़े-लिखे की धिक आकांक्षाएँ हैं। पूरी न होने पर गड़बड़ी। गलत रास्ते लेता है। पढ़ा-लिखा बेईमान है। अनपढ़ ईमानदार। अनपढ़ झूठ कम बोलता है। सहन शक्ति अधिक है। पढ़े-लिखे में उपभोक्ता प्रवृत्ति अधिक, उनपढ़ में सन्तोष होता है।”

मध्य आय वर्ग बच्चे

“अनपढ़ किसी न किसी हुनर में टॉप में होता है। घर से ज्यादा लगाव रखता है। झूठ नहीं बोलता। अनपढ़ कभी उल्टे काम नहीं करता। घर की जिम्मेदारी लेता है।”

उच्च आय वर्ग अभिभावक

“आज के बच्चे स्वार्थी हैं। असंवेदनशील हैं। मानवीय मूल्य पहुंच नहीं पाई है। संस्कार नहीं हैं उनके क्योंकि शिक्षक व्यापारी हैं, आज न इज्जत रही, न प्यार।”

उच्च आय वर्ग बच्चे

“पढ़े-लिखे में अहंकार, दूसरों को हीन दृष्टि से देखना, खेती व हाथ का काम न करना, उपभोक्तावाद, पश्चिमी दुनिया की तरफ भागने की लालसा है। उनपढ़ खुश मिजाज है, गरीबी के बावजूद खुश है, कुटिलता कम, स्नेह ज्यादा, मानवीयता अधिक। अमीर माँ अपने ही बच्चे की गंदगी से धिन करती है, पर ‘आया’ नहीं। अनपढ़ घर का ख्याल करता है, पैसा घर भेजता है। संस्कृति का ख्याल रखता है। संस्कृति पढ़े-लिखे नहीं। समझते। हमारे देश के लोग नकल करते हैं विदेशों की। स्वयं अपनी आलोचना, अपना मजाक बनाते हैं। भारत की गई - बीती छवि बनाने के जिम्मेदार हम हैं। देश के प्रति सम्मान नहीं। शिक्षा ने अपनी संस्कृति, भाषा, जमीन, देश के प्रति हीन भावना बढ़ाई है।”

A Matter of Quality

कामगार बच्चे (स्कूलों से विलग)

“पढ़ा-लिखा गलेदार (बदमाश) होता है।”

“अनपढ़ सीधा होता है, सब तरीके का काम करता है। पढ़ा-लिखा काम से जी चुराता है। अपना स्टैण्डर्ड बनाना चाहता है। कामचोर है। आवारा घूमता है। घर के काम में मदद नहीं करता। गाली गलौच करता है। अनपढ़ को आगे बढ़ने की कोई लालसा नहीं, पढ़-लिखा चालाक, अनपढ़ सीधा और सच्चा।”

अध्यापक (शिशु मन्दिर स्कूल)

“अंग्रेजी स्कूल के बच्चे बिगड़े ज्यादा रहते हैं क्योंकि माँ-बाप भी अहं से भरे रहते हैं और बच्चा अंग्रेजी सीखने में ध्यान लगाता है, नैतिक बातों में नहीं।”

अध्यापक (अंग्रेजी माध्यम स्कूल)

“अनपढ़ अपने दिमाग से जल्दी पकड़ करता है। उसकी स्मरण शक्ति अधिक होती है।”

अध्यापक (सिद्ध स्कूल)

“अनपढ़ का ज्ञान वास्तविक होता है। अनपढ़ कहीं भी काम करने को तैयार हो जाएगा। अनपढ़ की स्मरण शक्ति बड़ी होती है। घर के कामों में सहभागी होता है। पढ़ा-लिखा ७ बजे उठेगा। अनपढ़ को घर के काम से लगाव होता है। पढ़ा-लिखा घर के कामों से कटता है। अनपढ़ सज्जन है।”

अध्यापक (शहरी सरकारी स्कूल)

“पढ़े-लिखे घर पर काम नहीं करते - बिगाड़ते हैं माँ-बाप।”

अध्यापक (संभ्रान्त स्कूल)

“हाथ के काम का कोई महत्व नहीं है आज। नौकरी-शिक्षा-पैसा, जरूरी हो गया। सरकारी नौकरी सफलता की निशानी है। कोई जबाबदेही नहीं। पढ़ा-लिखा अनुशासनहीन है। किताबें पढ़ते हैं - गुणते नहीं। औरों न किया, मैं भी करूँ - कहते हैं। बुरी संगत में पड़ते हैं। मानवीय मूल्य और संस्कार नहीं आते। पीढ़ी अन्तर है। उपभोक्तावाद है। पैसा ज्यादा होना, व उसे बच्चों को देना, बच्चों की जरूरतें बढ़ाता जा रहे हैं।”

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